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**USDA Approves Bovine TB Free Status for 57 Michigan Counties**  
*Shrinks the MAZ to four counties, helps keep cattle farmers in business*

Lansing - Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (MDARD) Director Keith Creagh today announced 57 counties in the Lower Peninsula have been designated as Bovine Tuberculosis (TB) Free in an interim rule published in the Federal Register. Additionally, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) approved shrinking the state's Bovine TB Modified Accredited Zone (MAZ) even further by removing Presque Isle County. Only Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency and Oscoda counties in the easternmost area of the northern Lower Peninsula remain in the MAZ.

Bovine TB is a contagious bacterial disease of cattle that can affect other mammals, including humans. In 1994, a unique strain of bovine TB was identified in Michigan's free-ranging deer. USDA has worked with Michigan's farmers, veterinarians, Michigan State University Extension agents, Michigan's Departments of Natural Resources and Community Health, and MDARD on statewide disease surveillance testing, and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) tagging of 1.2 million Michigan beef and dairy animals representing \$9.17 billion in net worth.

"Congratulations to our producers. This announcement marks a turning point in the bovine TB program. Through hard work by beef and dairy farmers, effective surveillance testing, RFID, and movement certification requirements, we are able to protect and now open up new market opportunities for our combined beef and dairy industries," said Creagh. "It has been a long haul for our 13,000 beef and dairy producers since we started addressing this issue 17 years ago."

"This is a great accomplishment," said Dr. John Clifford, USDA APHIS Chief Veterinary Medical Officer. "Tuberculosis is a serious disease, and the State of Michigan has worked diligently with us to contain it."

Since disease testing began, 52 Michigan cattle farms and four privately owned cervid operations have been affected by bovine TB. Most of these TB positive farms have been in the MAZ, and were depopulated.

As USDA grants Michigan counties TB Free Status, MDARD simultaneously updates the state's zoning rules to match the federal requirements. The Michigan bovine TB rules have special regulatory applications, as written in the on-line booklet, *Split State Status and Zoning Rules, 2011*, for the following zones:

(more)

MAZ - Alcona, Alpena, Montmorency, and Oscoda, counties.

MAAZ - Antrim, Charlevoix, Cheboygan, Crawford, Emmet, Otsego and Presque Isle counties.

Bovine TB Free - Upper Peninsula and all counties in Lower Michigan not included in the MAAZ or the MAZ.

“Northern Lower Michigan producers committed themselves to the Wildlife Risk Mitigation Program (WRMP) and their willingness to adopt innovative farm management practices – effectively preventing wildlife contact - influenced USDA’s decision to upgrade our status,” Creagh said.

Michigan’s WRMP, which began in 2009, provides expert guidance on cattle/wildlife interactions. Since the program began, both MDARD and USDA have provided financial assistance to producers so they can create plans and build barriers that keep wildlife away from their cattle and cattle feed. To date, 830 farmers have signed up to create their own plans. MDARD expects all farms in the MAAZ and MAZ that sell cattle to have risk mitigation plans by January 1, 2012.

Visit MDARD and Emerging Diseases websites for a map and additional information, including the booklet explaining the Split State Status and Zoning Rule changes, and to join the Animal Health Listserv at: [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda) or [www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases](http://www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases).

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